

Endangered Historic Properties* in Volusia County

A List Endorsed by the Volusia County Historic Preservation Board, November 2009

Strawn Groves Packing House & Saw Mill, DeLeon Springs (NR)



The citrus packinghouse complex and sawmill are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are recognized as significant historic architectural resources associated with Florida's citrus industry. The 12 contributing buildings and 3 contributing structures that comprise the packinghouse complex retains its original architectural integrity to a high degree and represents the largest citrus-

related historic district documented in Florida. The sawmill is one of few examples left in Florida of an early 20th century timber processing operation. All of the buildings and structures associated with this listing are in an advanced state of deterioration.

Colonial New Smyrna Archeological Sites (NR)



In 1998, the cities of New Smyrna Beach and Port Orange, along with Volusia County, sponsored a comprehensive archeological survey to locate sites associated with the colonial New Smyrna settlement—the ambitious attempt by Andrew

Turnbull and partners to introduce 1,400 Mediterranean colonists to farm their plantation in the New World. Nearly 40 colonial-period archaeological sites were documented, including several that contain significant structural remains. After more than two centuries, New Smyrna's original town plan is beginning to emerge once again. Future archaeological surveys and excavations, in combination with site preservation and focused historical research, will provide a wealth of new data with which to fill in the gaps about life in 18th Century New Smyrna—one of Florida's greatest colonial experiments. The major threat for these nationally significant resources is that new development in certain areas of the City of New Smyrna Beach is destroying significant archeological deposits when not properly mitigated.

* Endangered historic properties shall be defined as significant historic resources in Volusia County subject to an immediate or pending threat that will substantially alter or destroy its integrity.

Spring Garden Ranch Historic District, DeLeon Springs (NR Eligible)



Surrounded by majestic oaks, these vernacular buildings form one of the few remaining historic agricultural complexes still in use in Volusia County. In 1910 Frederick N. Burt developed Spring Garden Ranch, and experimented with different methods to raise cattle, and giving that up, began to raise horse. His crew constructed barns for cattle, horses and hay, a blacksmith shop, corncrib, water tower, silo and workshop. Around 1949 the ranch was converted to

a public training center for standard bred (sulky & harness) race horse. Extensive damage from storms in 2004 required extensive repair, and additional work is needed. Lack of funds for repair and renovation is the immediate threat to this unique resource.

Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp (NR)



Members of the Spiritualist faith founded Cassadaga in 1895 as a religious camp meeting winter retreat. It came to be the group's second largest center after its New York headquarters and remains associated with the faith to this day. The National Register Historic District is comprised mostly of frame vernacular residences, but also includes the masonry

temple building, frame-built visitors' center, and several park/open space areas. Threats to the historic district and portions of the larger historic community of Cassadaga are associated with the pending development associated with the SR 472 Activity Center and annexations by the City of Deltona.

Underhill House, 227 Lemmon Road, Barberville (NR Eligible)



Constructed in 1879, this house is likely the oldest surviving brick house in Volusia County. The bricks used in the construction of the building were handmade by the Underhill family at a site near Deep Creek, just south of where the house stands. The Underhill family is one of the first families to introduce ornamental fern propagation to the Pierson area,

known as the "*Fern-growing Capital of the World*". Its current poor condition represents a threat to the building although the Barberville Pioneer Settlement acquired the property with the intent of restoring it, but struggle to secure funds to do so.

Fort Florida & Goat Island Burial Mounds, DeBary

Both these sites are sand burial mounds documented to contain human remains. These earthen structures are designed and intended by prehistoric peoples for the ritual interment of the deceased. Private parties currently own these two significant prehistoric resources and sacred Native American sites. Although protected by Chapter 872, Florida Statutes (legislation making it a felony to knowingly disturb human burials) these sites have been substantially disturbed and vandalized by artifact collectors.

Samsula Elementary School



Built in the Mediterranean Revival style popular in Florida 1920s boom time, this stucco building upgraded the wooden, one-room Briggsville School in Samsula. Constructed for about \$30,000 and opened in 1928, the school had several classrooms, indoor plumbing, and an auditorium. In continuous use as a public school for 80 years, the building has been only slightly altered and is a landmark for this rural community. No longer in public ownership, the future for this

historic community building is uncertain.

St. Johns River Shell Middens



These riverine shell middens, once massive in size, represent an accumulation of prehistoric subsistence several millennia in duration. Although shell pit excavations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries substantially destroyed most of these sites, recent archeological excavations at several locations have revealed intact cultural deposits with excellent preservation of organic materials. These deposits

often contain human remains and burials as well. Threats include ongoing shoreline erosion during high-water events, development, and disturbance by artifact collectors.

Rio Vista Subdivision Gateway, Calle Grande Street, Ormond Beach



This structure was built as a grand entryway for the Rio Vista subdivision platted in 1926. The subdivision was owned and developed by Walter C. Hardesty, who had made his fortune with the Hardesty Manufacturing Company, an Arts & Crafts furniture company, in Dover, Ohio, but had moved to Florida in 1922 to deal in real estate. By 1927, a hotel, thirty-eight homes and over fifteen miles of paved roads had been developed. But

this all came to a halt upon the advent of the Great Depression. The major threat to this structure is neglect.

Historic Pierson School (NR Eligible)



In 1926, the same year the Town of Pierson was incorporated, a new, Spanish Mission style school building was constructed for high school students to the west of the existing (now demolished) elementary school. The new structure had an auditorium with a balcony, dressing rooms, two large classrooms, a smaller classroom, principal's office, small library, and remarkably, two bathrooms. The school was the first

public building in the area to have an electric pump, plumbing and a water fountain. In 1962 a new high school was constructed; the historic buildings now house Pierson Elementary School, soon to be closed and no longer used as a public school. Despite the high potential for adaptive reuse, no effort to save the building has been initiated.

Rural Cemeteries of Volusia County



In recent years increased interest in genealogical research has generated many inquiries regarding cemeteries in Volusia County. Although most urban cemeteries in the county appear to be cared for (albeit to various degrees) it has come to the attention of local genealogical organizations and enthusiasts that most rural community and family cemeteries are suffering from neglect. A concerted effort is underway to photograph and record information from headstones in these cemeteries, however, concern also exists to properly manage and preserve these sacred properties—especially those cemeteries containing headstones from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Questions of property ownership, deteriorating headstones, vandalism, and a lack of preservation and maintenance funds plague those who are interested in doing more.